

Message Text

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S/S - MR. BORG

S/AB - AMB. BUNKER

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TO USDEL SECRETARY IMMEDIATE

INFO AMEMBASSY PANAMA PRIORITY

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E.O. 11652:XGDS-1

TAGS:PFOR/PN

SUBJECT:BRIEFING MEMORANDUM: U.S.-PANAMA TREATY

NEGOTIATIONS: "WORST-CASE" CONSIDERATIONS

TO THE SECRETARY FROM ROGERS

1. FOR CONTINGENCY PURPOSES WE HAVE PEERED DOWN THE PATH
TO SEE WHAT MIGHT HAPPEN IF NEGOTIATIONS ARE NOT RESUMED.
THE RESULTS ARE UNATTRACTIVE AND MAY BE UNDERSTATED.

2. WE CAN EXPECT THE FOLLOWING DEVELOPMENTS:

(A) THE OAS MEETING IN SAN JOSE IN JULY WILL BE THE FIRST
OPPORTUNITY FOR THE GOP TO BEGIN TO APPLY MULTILATERAL
PRESSURE ON US. THEY WILL PROBABLY USE IT.

(B) IN PANAMA THERE WILL BE A GRADUAL DETERIORATION IN
THE NEGOTIATING CLIMATE. TO MAINTAIN HIS NATIONALIST
CREDENTIALS, TACK WILL PROBABLY TELL THE PRESS EITHER
BEFORE OR AFTER THE SAN JOSE MEETING THAT THE NEGOTIA-
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TIONS ARE STALLED. THE PANAMANIAN PRESS WILL COMMENT
OPENLY ABOUT THE STALLED NEGOTIATIONS. THE GOP MAY
INITIATE A NUMBER OF MINOR HARASSING ACTIONS DURING
JULY TO SIGNAL ITS DISPLEASURE AT NEGOTIATING DELAY.

(C) AT THE END OF JULY, PANAMA WILL BE THE HOST TO THE FIRST MEETING TO ORGANIZE SELA (UNLESS IT IS POSTPONED AS BRAZIL HAS SUGGESTED). IN VIEW OF SELA'S ANNOUNCED PURPOSES, THE MEETING WOULD BE AN IDEAL FORUM FOR PANAMA PROBABLY IN EVEN STRONGER TERMS THAN IN THE SAN JOSE MEETING.

(D) BY AUGUST, WE MIGHT EXPECT A HARDENING OF GOP POSITIONS ON BILATERAL MATTERS AND ACTIONS AGAINST CANAL ZONE EMPLOYEES AND MILITARY PERSONNEL WHICH WILL RESTRICT THEIR FREEDOM OF MOVEMENT BETWEEN THE ZONE AND THE REPUBLIC. PANAMA COULD TAKE SUCH ACTIONS AS INCREASING THE "CHANGE OF STATUS" FEE AND INSIST THAT PEOPLE BORN IN THE ZONE CARRY PANAMANIAN PASSPORTS. AS IN THE PAST WHEN RELATIONS BECAME STRAINED, THERE WILL BE A FLOOD OF DIPLOMATIC NOTES OVER MINOR MATTERS PROTESTING TREATY VIOLATIONS.

(E) PANAMA WOULD PROBABLY JOIN THE ORGANIZATION OF NON-ALIGNED NATIONS MEETING IN LIMA IN AUGUST AND GET A STRONGLY WORDED RESOLUTION CONDEMNING U.S. PRESENCE IN PANAMA.

(F) IF YOU TRY TO TRAVEL TO L.A. IN AUGUST OR LATER PANAMA WILL MAKE SURE THAT THE STALLED NEGOTIATION WILL BE A HIGH PRIORITY ITEM FOR YOU.

(G) IN SEPTEMBER PANAMA WOULD GO TO THE UNGA WITH A STRONG STATEMENT AGAINST US. THERE COULD BE A UNGA RESOLUTION SUPPORTING THE PANAMANIAN POSITION AND URGING THE U.S. TO NEGOTIATE A TREATY PROMPTLY. PANAMA COULD GET FULL LATIN AMERICAN SUPPORT FOR A SECURITY COUNCIL SEAT. THE GOP WOULD PROBABLY ALSO USE THE SEVENTH SPECIAL UNGA AS ANOTHER FORUM FOR INTERNATIONAL SUPPORT. THIS WOULD NOT HELP OUR EFFORTS TO BUILD BRIDGES TO THE THIRD WORLD AT THE SEPTEMBER MEETING.

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THERE COULD BE DEMONSTRATIONS IN PANAMA SUPPORTING THE PANAMANIAN UN INITIATIVES.

(H) BY NOVEMBER RELATIONS BETWEEN THE U.S. AND PANAMA WOULD BE COOL AND DISTANT. THERE COULD BE DEMONSTRATIONS AGAINST THE ZONE NOVEMBER 3, PANAMA'S INDEPENDENCE DAY.

(I) IF THESE ACTIONS ARE NOT SUFFICIENT TO GET THE U.S. BACK TO THE NEGOTIATING TABLE, THE STAGE WOULD BE SET FOR A CONFRONTATION, EITHER PLANNED OR UNPLANNED, ON JANUARY 9, 1976, THE ANNIVERSARY OF THE 1964 RIOTS.

THIS WOULD MOST LIKELY TAKE THE FORM OF DEMONSTRATIONS

BY PANAMANIAN STUDENTS GETTING OUT OF HAND IN AREAS BORDERING THE ZONE, WITH INCURSIONS INTO THE ZONE TO DESTROY PROPERTY, TO DEFILE THE U.S. FLAG, ETC. THE NATIONAL GUARD WOULD BE UNLIKELY TO TAKE ANY IMMEDIATE ACTION TO RESTORE ORDER. THE U.S. WOULD HAVE TO TAKE DEFENSIVE ACTION. INJURIES AMONG THE DEMONSTRATORS ARE POSSIBLE.

(J) DURING THIS PERIOD, BETWEEN NOW AND JANUARY 9, THERE COULD BE A WARMING UP OF PANAMANIAN CONTACTS WITH CUBA AND OTHER BLOC COUNTRIES. THERE MIGHT BE A MORE ACTIVE SEARCHING OUT OF POSSIBLE ECONOMIC AND CULTURAL BONDS. ATTITUDES TOWARDS U.S. BUSINESS COULD HARDEN. THE PIPELINE AND COPPER PROJECTS WOULD PROBABLY GO TO NON-U.S. INTERESTS.

3. IN LIGHT OF THIS POSSIBLE SCENARIO, WE ARE WORKING HARD ON A PROPOSED STRATEGY WHICH WILL TAKE INTO ACCOUNT DEFENSE DEPARTMENT CONCERNS. IT WILL BE AVAILABLE SHORTLY AFTER YOUR RETURN. INGERSOLL

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